

BRIEF HISTORY OF FERN HAZEL HAMBLIN GRAHAM

My Grandfather, Richard Henry Hamblin, came to America, from Newbury, England, in late 1868 or early 1869. I am including a more detailed account of his life in America, and it is the last pages of this history account of my life. I will relate a brief part of it here, but please read the last five pages of this for some interesting history of early days in the Clearfield area.

Richard Henry was about 14 years old when he got to America, and he came with his Uncle Steven Nalder, who settled in what is now Layton, Utah. Steven had come to America in 1853. When Richard Henry got to Layton, he worked for Steven and others doing whatever work he could find. By about 1871 He had saved up about \$350, enough to get a ticket to sail back to England to see his father Isaac Hamblin. He had re-married after his first wife, Jane, died in 1868. He married a Mary Fulbrook. They had two children. When Richard Henry got back to England, Mary had deserted the family. He hired a young girl, Emily Sloper, to care for the children.

Richard Henry soon fell in love with the girl, Emily. They were married on January 1, 1874. They had a son, Richard Henry Plantagent, born on April 11, 1875. When the young son was about three months old They decided to sail back to America, and make their home here. They lived at Uncle Steven Nalder's place for awhile, then he got some homestead land in a sandy area of land about 4 or 5 miles northwest of Layton. It became known as Sandridge, and eventually was named Clearfield, because Grandpa had cleared sagebrush and other growth from the several hundred acres of land. They made their permanent home in Clearfield about 1877. He and his little family were the first settlers in Clearfield.

During these years 6 more sons, and 2 daughters were born. The community grew some, but not too fast. The prevalent church in the area, and in Utah was the Mormon church. The Mormons had come to Utah in 1845. They belonged to the Church of England, but on September 3, 1896, Richard, Emily and their 6 oldest children were baptized into the Mormon church.

Grandma died October 28, 1928, and Grandpa died March 23, 1929. The oldest son, Richard Henry Plantagent went on a Mormon "mission" to England from October 23 1897 to September 23, 1899. He was 22 years of age when he left. Upon his return from England, he married Susannah Ellen Venable on January 17, 1900. He bought ten acres of land at the northwest corner of the intersection of 1000 West and 700 South in Clearfield. They had seven children, Mattie, Ray, Frances (Frankie), Golden, Elton, Mirla, and Andrew. Susannah died January 25, 1918 with the raging flu that killed over one million people in the United States that year. Andrew, their youngest, also died with the same malady, near the same time.

On January 26, 1921 Richard married Hazel Emily Thurgood Johnston. She was previously married to Stewart Johnston. There was a divorce, evidently caused from wife and child abuse. Hazel had a son with that marriage, and he was named Leland Vernon, born December 8, 1917. Richard raised Leland as his own child! Richard and Hazel had six children. the first-born was Fern Hazel (THAT'S ME!!), born December 31, 1921; the second born was my sister Larna Eliza, born June 20, 1924; the third was my sister Beth, born December 6, 1926, the fourth was my brother Lamar Richard, born September 13, 1929, and the fifth was my brother Blaine, born November 1, 1933.

Papa was a farmer. He also had a grocery store and meat market. He had a slaughter-house on the northeast corner of the ten acres. He slaughtered most of the meat he sold. Papa was a hard worker, and a wonderful father. He was very protective of Mama and us children. I remember many times when Papa would take us to town to shop with him and Mama.

I always loved to play outside, and I loved all my brothers and my sisters, including Papa's first family. I never thought of any of them as being half brothers or sisters! When I was old enough to remember, only two of them were living with us. That was Elton and Miria. I had a wonderful earlier life. I had neighbor girls to play with and as I became older, we went to school together. I had more fun than ever, playing with the school kids, as well as my own brothers and sisters. Being the oldest child, other than Leland, I was always enthused and happy when another child was born into the family! My delight was to help take care of the babies and see them growing up. My two sisters and I were always very close.

Papa always took us to church. He was always putting his family first, and in later years he began to have problems of high blood pressure. When I was about fourteen, he would have attacks that would prevent him from doing any type of work. This went on until I was sixteen, when he became seriously ill. The doctor told him he could no longer work like he had been doing, and he should get him a band or sheep and just take care of them. He did that, and we went with Papa when he took the sheep into the mountains to feed on the range land there. Papa kept having problems with his blood pressure, and the fall, the sheep were brought back to our little farm. Papa began having more and more attacks. I heard him tell Mama that he didn't think he was going to make it. I was so worried and distraught. I loved Papa so much. He had always called me "My Girl". He was ill most of the winter and got very, very sick in January 1938. I heard him tell Mama that his first family he had with Susannah had been given land and property, and they already had their share. He said that his and Mamas children were to have whatever he had if he didn't make it. He passed away February 15, 1938. It was very hard to see him suffer so long, then have to leave us, and his funeral February 19, 1938 was a heart rendering day for me and the family.

After Papa's passing I felt so lonesome for a long time. Mama had been so dependent on Papa, and she was at a loss as how to handle some of the lot that fell upon her. I, being the oldest girl was able to help her with many decisions that confronted her from time to time. Elton and Miria had both married. Brother Leland would work anywhere he could get work. He was not in school, as he had a severe hearing defect, and it was hard for him to know what we were saying. We four older children pitched in as best we could, although we were in school. We had an old car, but Mama couldn't drive it, and we kids were not old enough to drive yet. Leland took the car some, but it soon "konked out"! We had to walk to church and school, or wherever we went. We rode the bus to school when we started High School. I was a Freshman when Papa died. I had been held back one year, as my sister Larna would not stay in the first grade class in Syracuse! She would fight the teacher, run out of class, cry constantly, so Mr. Anderson, the principal had me come in the first grade room to keep her "In order". I was worried about my own class and my own grades, as far as passing the second grade. Mr. Anderson told me that I wouldn't have to worry, he would take care of that situation. Well, at the end of the year, He didn't honor his word and I was held back in the second grade because of it.

I enjoyed going to Davis High School, and met friends there that I enjoyed being with. I had not been too interested in dating, and Papa felt I was not old enough to date, anyway! I did date a time or two before Papa died, and after he passed away I did date more. Most of my time was taken up with helping the family, and going to school. I met several boys I liked, but the one I dated most was Virgil Brown. He was somewhat older than I was, but was always polite to me.

When I went to High School, I also went to Seminary. We were Mormon Church members and went to all church meetings and activities since I can remember. In the Seminary we studied Mormon Doctrine. We studied the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and the Covenants. The Doctrine and Covenants was a multi-volume writings of Mormon church authorities, many of them written by the church Presidents, from the first president, Joseph Smith to the current president. One day we were studying the Bible, when the teacher said something that made me wonder! He said that the bible was correct in-so-far as it is translated correctly. I had always believed the bible to be God's word, and that statement puzzled me. I thought to myself "Just who came down from heaven and told the Mormons which part was true and which part was not true. I was always taught never to doubt anything the Mormon authorities said! I was taught that they were called of God. I was a devout Mormon.

As time went on, I dated Virgil more, although not often. I enjoyed being with him, and I knew he was quite fond of me. As he wanted to be with me more and more, I felt that someday he might want to marry me. But I still enjoyed being with my neighbor girl friends, and we spent lots of time together. I chummed with Lola Moss, my closest girl friend, a lot. She was a little older than I was.

One day Lola and I went out in our apple orchard to get some apples. This was in August, the apples were not quite ripe, but we enjoyed them, even green ones. We got our apples, a little pan full, and went back to the house. As we got to the kitchen door, to go inside, all of a sudden, to our surprise, a boy came riding up on a bicycle! He was out of breath and didn't say anything until he got a few breaths. Then he told us that his name was Ben L. Graham, that he was from Texas, and he had seen me in the apple orchard. About that time two more boys came around the corner of the house, and acted surprised when they saw Ben L. standing there. Any, Ben L. asked me if I would go on a picnic with him. I was astonished, and could only say "I'll have to ask my Mother". I went in the house and told her that some boys from Texas wanted us to go on a picnic with them. Mama looked at me and she said "Absolutely NOT". Then she relented, and said that I could invite them in the house, but that I could not go anywhere with them. The other two boys were also from Texas and the three of them were working for the Japanese farmer who lived across the railroad track to the north of our house. They would come to our house a lot. R.M. Barrington was one of the boys. He played the guitar. Ben L. played the Mandolin and a harp called a Jews harp and he also played the harmonica. The other boy was David Travis. He did not play a musical instrument. Mama played the piano. We spent many hours together that fall, playing, singing, and the three Texas boys became very close to the entire family. My brother Lamar played a drummers role on a pan, bucket or anything he could beat on. It was a good thing for all of us and I'm sure it helped take some of the sadness out of our lives.

I continued dating Virgil some, but Ben L. and I became very good friends in a short time, and I was happy about it. Ben L. had a 1931 Model A Ford Roadster, with a nice rumble seat, and we went to shows, picnics, etc. in it. It was a fancy automobile in it's day! Ben L. had not been dating me before long until he began asking me to marry him. I was only sixteen, and we were different religions, and I did not really know him well enough, nor his family at all, and although he asked me many times, I was sure I loved him, but there were just too many reservations in my mind, to make a commitment like that. He had to go back to Texas in early November, back to his job. He worked for a nursery and florist company in Abilene, Texas, he said.

Ben L. and his friends from Texas did leave in early November, and I knew I would miss them all. They were clean talking boys, were fun to be with, and all my brothers and sisters loved them. I know it helped Mama, too, as they loved to be with Mama. They were more like home-folks. Ben L. said that he would write me as soon as he got home. I did not know if he would really keep in touch, or if he would forget all about us. I wanted him to remember him, but I wondered that since I would not marry him, if he would ever want to write me or even see me again. Besides, my friend Virgil still came to see me and I was sure he would ask me to marry him some day. He was the same religion as me--Mormon--and I had always been taught to never marry out of my own religion.

Ben L. had said that he would write me as soon as he got home. Well, he did! Before he left, he had told me that he was coming back after me next year. He wrote me often and almost each letter said that he was coming back. We corresponded the rest of that winter, then on into spring and summer. In late August he did come back! He still had his cute Model A Ford Roadster, and there were two different Texas boys that came with him, Clint Harliss and Baxter Easterling. They went to work for a Greek man who was farming some ground about two blocks away from our house. His name was Bill Poulous. Ben L. had a job in Texas that he got everything done in the nursery where he worked, then he could take about whatever time off from the job that he wanted to. He was like an assistant manager of the company. The boys topped sugar beets for Mr. Poulous and had contracted to all his crop, which would take them well through September and October.

Needless to say, I was really happy that Ben L. came back. It was not long before Ben L. started asking me again and again and again to marry him, almost every time we were together. I knew I loved him, but still had reservations about marriage. I was still only 17 then, I had to enroll in school in early September, and still felt that I was needed at home to help Mama and the family. Papa had been gone since February, and I still missed him so much. Then, too, he was different religion. He was a Baptist. My Aunts, Mama's sisters kept telling me not to marry him unless he joined the Mormon church. I also knew he and those Texas boys did not use some of the foul language that some of the Mormon boys did. They were always kind and courteous to me and to Mama and the whole family. I prayed a lot as to what I could do, but could not seem to get an answer in my heart as to what I should do about Ben L. I had to make a decision. I did. I enrolled in school, I had to register for classes awhile before school started. I still worried and kept praying about what I should do with my life.

In mid-September I had a dream one night. I dreamed that I was in a big crowd of people. There were friends, relatives, and people I had never seen before. I wondered why they were all around me, when suddenly I saw everybody looking up in the sky. I looked up and saw a string, with something tied onto it. It was a piece of paper. I took it off and when I opened it up, I began to cry and cry. The crowd was surprised and they said "Why are you crying? You have been waiting for an answer and now you have it". I told them "Yes, I know I have an answer, but I do not know what it means". Then I noticed that the crowd began to divide on each side and opened up. I saw a tall, stately man come slowly walking toward me. He came and stood in front of me. I had to look up to see his face. He was smiling at me and softly spoke. He said "It means, do it without fail!". The dream woke me up. Nothing was ever said in the dream about marriage.

Although nothing had been mentioned in that dream, I felt, and knew that I had the answer I was wanting. I got up the next morning, got dressed, ready for school, then went into the kitchen. Mama was cooking breakfast. She was reaching over to put more wood in the cookstove and I said "Mama, I'm going to marry Ben L.". I know it startled her because she raised up quickly and said "You're WHAT??" I told her again, "Yes, I'm going to marry Ben L."

I had been helping Mama with the family more and more since Papa left us, and I still had mixed emotions about the whole affair, but I felt that some power, higher than I, was helping me make the decision for me. Ben L. had asked me so many times to marry him, that I wondered if he would just give up asking any more, but the next time we went on a date he did ask me and I said, "YES!!!". Wow, he was overjoyed at that answer!!! That was in early October 1939, and Ben L. had to be back on his job by about November 1st. so we planned our wedding date for October 18th. Ben L. was so very happy, and so was I. All doubts of my decision were gone and we both looked forward to October 18, 1939!

We were married in the Bishop's home in Clearfield. His name was Melvin Woods. His wife, Laver, was our witness. We were married at ten o'clock in the morning. Since we had never done this before we were a couple of "green horns"! Before we left, Bishop Woods told me after the ceremony, that, now, I had a mission to do, and that was to convert Ben L. to Mormonism. We went back to the house, Ben L. went back to the beet field and I started helping with our wedding reception plans with Mama and others. The reception was to be that night in the Mormon Recreation Hall in Clearfield, next door to the Bishops home.

About 400 people attended the reception! There were about that many residents in Clearfield and surrounding communities. We received lots of nice gifts, especially towels, table cloths, etc., as lots of the people knew we would be traveling. At the wedding receptions, it was a custom that some of the people who came would dance. I had danced a little with friends in high school and other activities, but wasn't too enthused about dancing. Ben L. would not dance. He said he had never dances with a girl in his life, didn't believe in it, and he didn't dance! I only danced once or twice, then I knew Ben L. did not want me to, so I did not dance any more that night. We tried to get Ben L. to dance the Virginia Reel. He finally consented to try it, as he wouldn't be "hugging up" a girl, but when it started, he took a few steps, stopped, and said "This is not for me".

We left for Texas a few days after that. I went back to school and asked the Principal if I could get part of my tuition and book money back. He wanted to know why. When I told him I was getting married, he said "didn't you know you were getting married two weeks ago?" I told him I did not. I know he was really wondering why I registered for school, then decided to get married! When we left for Texas, it was quite cool. Clint and Baxter rode in the rumble seat, along with a lot of our gifts. We had a expanding type carrier attached to the running board of the car, on my side, and it was filled with gifts, too. We had shipped a very large box of gifts home by Railway Express. We drove to Salina, Colorado that day and stayed in a motel that night. The next day we drove to Whiteface, Texas where Ben L.'s parents lived. I met them for the first time. The other boys hitch hiked on home that same day. I did not quite know how Mother and Daddy Graham would receive me, but I almost immediately fell in love with them, and they with me. The next day we drove on to Clyde Texas, where we were to live.

We lived in Clyde, 15 miles east of Abilene where Ben L. worked. The house was where Ben L. had been raised, and for the two of us, it was BIG! It still belonged to his parents. After some six or seven months, we moved into Abilene, to be closer to Ben L.'s work. We moved into a one room of a lady's house. We shared the bathroom, the lady was very nice to us, and we enjoyed living there for several months. It was only about 3/4 mile from Ben L.'s work. It was on a quiet street, North 18th., and was not far from where Ben L. went to Hardin Simmons University.

I wanted to go to church at my church, but there were no Mormon churches there, or in Clyde. Clyde was a town of about 400 people; Abilene was a city of about 28,000 people. We went to Ben L.'s church. It was a Baptist church, I enjoyed the music programs, the singing, and the preachers did talk about things I knew, and had been taught some of them in the Mormon church, but I still missed my own church activities. But soon after we moved to Abilene, a friend, who knew I was a Mormon, told us about a Mormon missionary in town. We located him, and Ben L. and I would go to the Mormon meeting in the young man's place he was staying. I think his name was Steve Bennion, but am not sure about his first name, but I know that Bennion was his last name. I was glad to go there. We started going there together. Lots of Sundays, there would be only Ben L. and I, and the missionary. We went to most of the meetings there instead of the Baptist Church. There never were many at the meetings. I think one Sunday there were seven people in all. I was glad that Ben L. was willing to go to my church with me. He always wanted to please me in all things.

We had some neighbors that lived next door to us on North 18th. street. They were Marvin and Velma Weldon. They were somewhat older than we were. They went to the Baptist Church, only a few blocks from where we lived. The Mormon mission was quite a way from our house, and a little hard to get to, as we had to cross several busy main streets of Abilene, so we started going back to the Baptist church, and would sit by the Weldon's. Velma and Marvin became like parents to me. Velma was always helping me with recipes, sewing, and just as a talking companion. When I was carrying my first child, in 1940, Velma was a great help to me, and she assisted me the night I went to the hospital to deliver Ben Richard!

The early morning that Ben Richard was born, it was 106 degrees at six o'clock on July 24, 1941. Ben L. was allowed to be in the delivery room with me. They had him sit on a high stool by an east window. The sun began shining through that window, and it got very hot by that window! Ben Richard was just about to be born. I remember that the doctor said that someone had better go take care of the Dad, as he was about to pass out, sitting by window, with the sun bearing down on him! I was unable to give birth to Ben Richard without a small operation being done, and because of that, the doctor confined me to the bed for sixteen days, to recover from the operation. Ben L. got one of his High School friends, Melba Moore, to come stay with me during that time.

We were SO PROUD of Ben Richard!! Ben L. was the only male grandson of the Jehu-Rebecca Graham lineage that could carry on the Graham name. Ben L.'s Daddy had three brothers and ten sisters. Two of the brothers were born and died in infancy. The other one, Uncle Silas, married, but never had any children before he died at an early age. There were lots of male children born to eight of the ten girls, but their names were not Graham! So we were really glad that we were going to be able to, hopefully, carry in the Jehu-Rebecca Graham lineage.

When we went to the Baptist Church occasionally, the preacher would read the bible, and then talk about the scriptures he had read. He would say things that I knew were true, and I could agree, partly because Ben L. and I had read those things in the bible, too. We often would read our bibles in spare time, as questions about our beliefs came. We never argued about our beliefs, but we both enjoyed discussing what we believed. I would sometimes tell him about things I believed that he did not think were correct. We would study and look up scriptures on the subject. Sometimes I could see that it was somewhat different from what I had been taught. Sometimes, in the preachers messages, I would be concerned about the subject enough to cause me to really question my heart. Sometimes things puzzled me! Many of the things I was taught in the Mormon church were different to what was being said at the Baptist Church. I believed that Joseph Smith was the true prophet, that the Book of Mormon was true, that all our authorities were called of God. I knew that children had to be "sealed" to their parents to be theirs in heaven. Ben L. and I were discussing that belief one time. He respected my belief, but said to me "Sugarbabe, just who do you think gave Ben Richard to us?? No one but God! God gave him to US and no one else, and he will always be our son, no matter what!! That made me think, and I began to wonder about the "sealing" situation. In my church, as a rule, after announcements were made, etc, then several children would come up and testify that the Book of Mormon was true, and that ours was the true church. I believed that, and I knew that nobody could ever make me change my religion. And I can say that no one ever asked me to change my religion.

December 7, 1941 was truly a "day of infamy", as President Roosevelt described it when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. It seemed to us that the whole world was in turmoil. In a few months, we found out that Ben L. would have to go into service unless he was working in an essential industry related to the war effort. My half-brother Ray Hamblin had previously written that they were trying to find people to work at the Ogden Arsenal, located in Roy, Utah, also a big need for workers to complete the huge expansion of Hill Airforce Base, located about five miles east of Clearfield, Utah. We decided that perhaps we should move to Utah to help there. We moved to Clearfield in May 1942. Ben L. went to work for a Contractor at Hill Airforce Base until January 1, 1943, then went to work for the Navy, at the newly completed Naval Supply Depot in Clearfield. He was the 19th person hired in. The Depot eventually had over 8,000 civilians and several Navy personnel there. Ben L. became a supervisor almost immediately, but soon got his "greeting" from the draft board. It so happened that he was supervisor of one warehouse which contained a secret weapon the Navy had. He was the only civilian cleared for "top secret" on it, and when he would get a draft board call, he would get a deferment from Washington in a few days. This went on several times in 1943 and 1944. His Mother even came from Texas to see him off---into the service---and then he got another deferment. It was trying times, trying to live that way. Finally Ben L. said he could no longer "take it", and on the next call he rejected the deferment and went in service. He was in service in the Pacific, until his discharge July 31 1946. Upon his return he went back to work at the Naval Supply Depot. He worked twenty years there, then went to Hill Airforce Base and worked another sixteen years. He retired from civil service in 1977.

During those years we would go on a vacation every year, usually to Texas to see Ben L.'s folks. Ben L. always said that he was going to have a vacation with his children every year, somewhere. When we went to Texas, we went to the Baptist church, as there was no Mormon church to go to. I always enjoyed Ben L.'s church, but was a devout, unchanging Mormon. All my

All my folks were Mormons, and I knew I would never change. Ben L. had never asked me to change my religion. We often talked to each other about our beliefs. I loved my Book of Mormon as well as the bible. I often missed being with my people when in Texas. But I loved Ben L. his parents and his two sisters, Katie Ruth and Thelma Lavene. In Utah, as well as when we were living in Texas, Ben L. would often go to church with me. Occasionally my relatives would come to our house and try to convert Ben L. to Mormonism. I was always willing, and wanted them to come. I wanted him to be a Mormon, but I was somewhat doubtful that he would ever be a Mormon. The people who came to the house would show charts, make statements, read from the bible and Book of Mormon, then ask Ben L. if he believed that. Quite often he would get his bible and quote or read scripture to them that didn't seem to agree with what they were saying. After the "teachers" would leave Ben L. and I would discuss, and look up the subjects in the bible. I could see, and began to wonder why there were differences. Sometimes, even the teachers had differences on what was said. I began having strange about my life.

On April 9, 1944, James Leslie was born to us. He was named for our friend James Brisxoe who lived at Clyde, Texas, also for his Granddaddy Graham, Ben Leslie. On June 24, 1947, Sidney Lynn was born to us. He was named for Ben L.'s Uncle Sidney Elias Pass who lived in Abilene, and was Mother Graham's brother. I should have said, too, that James Leslie was also named for his Daddy, Ben Leslie Jr. The name Lynn for Sidney was a name we just both liked, although Ben L. had a friend in Clyde named Lynn Patterson. On July 27, 1952 Eddie Lee was born to us. Eddie was named for his Grandmother Graham, Eddie April, and Lee was a family name in the Turner family, Mother Graham's maternal relatives. Then, on August 7, 1954, we felt a miracle had happened when Rebecca Alice was born to us, after four boys in a row. She was named for her two great grandmothers Rebecca Ann Crabtree Graham and Dovie Alice Turner Pass. Ben L. always wanted to have six children, but after we got Becky, we both decided that was an ideal family for us.

In the summer of 1950, we took a three-week vacation to Texas, again. Mother and Daddy Graham had moved to St. Joe, Arkansas. We went to Abilene, first, to visit Uncle Sidney and his daughter Peggy Jo, and she had two son. We stayed with Peggy. We had other relatives and friends there, and also visited in Clyde with friends there. One hot July Sunday morning, we all went to church at the BIG First Baptist Church in Abilene. I had never been in so big a church! They had a huge choir, not as big as our Tabernacle Choir, but it was huge, and the songs and music they played really touched my heart. I did not know it at the time, but afterward I knew I was getting under conviction about my own soul, and my relationship to Jesus Christ. The main emphasis in the Baptist churches was always Jesus. They always preached that it was so important to really know Jesus in your heart, not just in your mind, and that to really know Him you had to admit to yourself that you are a sinner in God's sight, and that you have to accept His promise of salvation by FAITH. The speakers always preached that there was no other way to be saved and go to heaven. They even said that salvation was not of our works, our goodness, or anything we could EXCEPT to trust in Him.

That night, our friends Velma and Marvin Weldon asked if we would like to go with them to a church called Temple Baptist Church, not very far from Uncle Sidney's house. Baptist churches, and a lot of the other churches have two services on Sunday. We decided we would go with them, so everybody went to that church that night. I wasn't too enthused about it, but did want to be with Velma and Marvin again.

As the preacher was preaching about Christ being the only way of salvation, I was suddenly wanting to listen intently. I knew that everything he was saying was true. I remembered Ben L. and I reading about a lot of things in the bible, that the preacher was saying. I had been wondering and was concerned about my relationship to God, and was somewhat troubled by it. I realized in that meeting that I had not truly and really accepted Jesus Christ as my own Personal Saviour, and I realized I was a sinner in God's sight, and I was lost without Him in my heart and life----not just in my mind. At the end of the preachers message, he said that the bible says that you are not saved by coming forward, but we, after we trust Him with our souls, should come forward, professing Him to the world, by that act. I thought "What would my relatives say, or think, if I went forward in this Baptist church and took Jesus as my Personal Lord and Saviour???" I bowed my head and began to pray to God for guidance. I knew Ben L. was praying for me to do God's will, and while I was earnestly praying, and under conviction, Ben L. leaned over to me and put his arm around me and asked if I would like to go to the altar and give my heart and my whole life to Jesus Christ. I knew what God wanted me to do. I knew He wanted me to accept Him in my heart. Suddenly, this thought came to me, "I don't care what my people, or anybody else thinks, as long as I know I'm doing what God wants me to do. In that instant a huge burden was lifted from my heart, and I walked down the aisle of that church, went to the altar where the preacher was, and gave my heart and my life to Jesus Christ!! Unless you really know Him in your heart, you cannot imagine what a burden was lifted from me that instant!! Ben L. went forward with me and rededicated his life to Christ, at the same time. The preacher talked to me about my decision, and he helped me understand why it is necessary to profess my Saviour before men. I was not asked to be a Baptist. Nothing was said about church membership, but I suddenly went from Mormonism to Christianity!!! I truly felt like I had been born again!!

One week later we went with our three boys, at that time, to St. Joe, Arkansas, where Mother and Daddy Graham lived. I was so happy during that week before we left for Arkansas! Ben L. and I seemed to be so much closer, if that was possible. I was so happy, I wanted to get on the house tops and tell the whole world about what had happened to me. We went to Mother and Daddy Graham's church the next Sunday. It was in a remote area about 2½ miles from Mother and Daddy Graham's house. It was called Zion's Light Baptist Church. During the previous week, we read the bible and I realized that Jesus was set the example of baptism, as he was baptized of John. He was not baptized for His salvation!!! He had NO sin! And it was an example of the death to our old sinful life, a burial of the old life, and a resurrection to a new life!! I realized that the ordinance of Baptism was not for salvation---it was because of salvation!

This Sunday we went to church, with Mother and Daddy Graham, I listened to the preacher some, but could not get the thought of being baptized out of my mind! When the sermon was over, and the invitation was given, I really wanted the whole world to know about my conversion to Christianity. And I wanted to become a member of a Baptist Church!! I went forward and told the preacher that I had already accepted Jesus in my heart, but I wanted to become a member of the church. The church accepted me as a member upon completion of baptism. The Baptists vote on approval of members joining the church. The baptismal service was scheduled for 2 PM that afternoon. We drove past the church about a mile to get to the creek I was to be baptized in. A young man also had accepted Christ that morning, and was to be baptized, too. The creek had crawfish in it! You could see them on the bottom of the creek! I had never seen crawfish before! I was to be baptized first. After my baptism, the people at the service told me that I must have been so anxious to be baptized, that I literally drug that preacher into the water!!

I knew that by going forward at church that day, I was telling the world I was a child of God--A Christian. I knew that my baptism was telling the world what had happened in my heart and life.

We returned home to Clearfield after our vacation time was over. Some of my people, I realized, were greatly saddened when learning of my decision. I respected that, and my love for those people was not lessened by that--rather, I realized that I could love them in a greater way, with my Saviour leading my life. There were some churches besides Baptist around us, but no Baptist Church. We started going to the First Baptist Church in Ogden, but a few months later we did not feel we were where God wanted us. We resolved to try starting a Christian mission in our home, to help people around us to have a place to worship. We decided to go around the neighborhood asking people to come. We did find a couple from Birmingham, Alabama, that were interested, and another couple about 1/2 mile from us. Mother Graham also had written about a man named Ira Marks who had built a 20 foot by 40 foot church on a boat, and went into the river basins of Louisiana to witness to the Cajun Indians there. He said that he felt that God was leading him to go into the western states to do mission work there. We wrote him, and he said he felt God could use him in Utah, and he came out to Utah and helped in the mission work we started. The little mission soon outgrew our living room and we rented the music room at North Davis Junior High School. We had to pay the janitor to open up for us and close. He never did come into any of our services. He seemed to dislike very much if we were a minute late getting out of the building, so one Sunday after our services, Ben L. told him that He wouldn't have to open up or close if he wanted to give us a key. We could do that without any trouble. He let Ben L. know that he couldn't do that because they couldn't let "outsiders" have a key. Well, just who was the outsider, him, or us?? My Grandfather Hamblin was the first person to settle Clearfield, and my father was the first child in Clearfield! Just who was the outsider??

Our first Sunday we started the mission we had thirteen people attend. It grew a little at a time until on April 1, 1951 we organized the First Southern Baptist church of Clearfield, with 29 charter members. We all dedicated our time and resources in reaching out in the community for those who needed a place of worship, and to those who did not know our Saviour.

In successive years we started Baptist missions in cities near us, as well as helping start missions in cities some distance from us. We started missions in Layton, Ogden, Brigham City, Logan, Idaho Falls, Bountiful, Kaysville, St. George, Evanston, Plain City. We had 5 Vacation bible schools in summer! We also started a mission in Roy. God greatly blessed the church, although it did not grow large. Lots of people in the Airforce joined for the time they were stationed at Hill Airforce Base. We built a church building about 1954, and by that time we had about 100 members. We eventually grew, by the 70's to more than 300 members. In the early 80's we were able to get a 14 acre plot in east part of Layton, and we built another sanctuary and class rooms there. At present (2000), we have well over 1100 members. We have two Sunday morning services and Sunday schools, and one Sunday night service. We now have Saturday services for those who have to work on Sunday, or cannot come on Sunday for various reasons. We have a Saturday morning service and a Saturday night service. We have five pastors. We will have special services on the church anniversary April 1, 2001. We plan on special offerings for the building fund to build another sanctuary that will seat 1300. We hope to raise \$500,000 that day. God is really blessing!!

I know that from the time I questioned the Mormon Seminary teacher in 1937 about the bible not being true in some places, that God was leading my life, and I know that God had a hand and a plan for my life that would bring Ben L. into my life, and I'm thankful that I was able to come out of Mormonism into Christianity. My prayer is that whomever may read this brief history of my life will also come to know my precious Saviour, as I did. So many of our friends and relatives don't let God lead them in their lives. YES, they are good and wonderful people in man's eyes, but some may be lost, in God's sight, because they are trying to "work out their own salvation", and it cannot be done by man. Only the precious blood of Jesus, shed on Calvary's tree can save anybody. The bible says, in many places, that Christ, and Christ alone is the answer. Turn your life over to Him, and your life will be completely changed.

There were several other things that happened during the time I was so concerned about my relationship to God. One time I said something to Mama and Beth about religion and the church. I wondered later, if I had really said what I did, as it was not what the Mormon church taught. I wondered if Mama and Beth had noticed it. I soon found out, as the very next day, my cousin Lydia and husband Omar Bangeter came from Bountiful, seventeen miles away!! We visited a little, then said, "Fern I believe you are losing your testimony for the Mormon church!" I knew then, that Mama or Beth had called Omar. who was a well-versed person of Mormonism. After he said that, I said "Well, Omar, I may be losing my testimony for the Mormon church, but if I am, I'm gaining a greater testimony for Jesus" That wasn't what Lydia and Omar wanted to hear!

Awhhile after I had become a Christian, I decided I wanted to get my name off of the Mormon church records. I was told that to do that, I would have to go to a Bishop's Court. I was willing and anxious to do whatever was necessary to get this done. I tried several times to get Bishop Victor Smith to have the Bishops Court, but was always put off, with various excuses that he could not do it yet. I had known Victor nearly all my life. Finally, I got him to set a time and date for me to appear before the Bishops Court. The bishop's councilmen were to be with him. He said I could bring two witnesses if I wanted to. I did want to, and I chose our pastor, Dr. William Earl Green and Ben L. We went to the Mormon Ward church building at the appointed hour. Bishop Smith was there, along with his two councilors, Eldren Butler and a man I did not know. After several minutes of questions as to why I wanted to do this, the "Council" retired to another room, while Dr. Green, Ben L. and I waited. After several minutes the "Council" returned. Bishop Smith said to me that they had never had do anything like this before, and did not know quite how to go about. He finally said that there were three things I could never do again. The first was that I could never speak in a Mormon church again. I told him that was alright, as I did not think I would ever want to speak in a Mormon church again. The second thing he said I could never do was to pray in a Mormon church again. I told him that I could pray to my God anywhere I was! The third thing he said I couldn't do was that I could Never receive any kind of help from the Mormon church! I told him that I was so glad that I had a God which I could call on for help when I needed it. Then he really surprised me by saying "Fern, we can't put on here that you asked us to take your name off the church record. We have to put it on here, that we asked you to leave the church"!!! I was so disgusted by that time that I said "I don't care what you put on there as long as I get my name off the Mormon church record. I remember, as I write this, that this happened in 1953.

Another event that happened in our church in its infancy, in 1952 or 1953 was about a Navajo Indian. Ben L. was a supervisor at the Naval Supply Depot in Clearfield, and had some 170 people under his supervision. About that time, the government brought some Navajo people to Utah and placed them in jobs. They were all WWII veterans that needed jobs. Ben L. had several of them assigned to him. One of them was a man named Tom Nelson. Tom could hardly speak English. He was a typical Navajo Brave, with his hair tied in a kind of knot behind his head, wrapped up in a rag of some sort. Ben L. soon found out that he was in Germany during the war, and was a personal scout for General Patton, as they were heading for Berlin after the Normandy invasion. Tom said he had to swim the Rhine river, while General rode across the Rhine on a pontoon bridge built for his tanks to go across on! Tom was not a Christian. Ben L. tried to talk to him about Christ, but he wanted nothing to do with him. Ben L. decided he would try and get Tom to go to church. Tom would promise to go, just to get Ben L. to leave him alone! Several times his wife would say he wasn't home when we would stop to pick him up. Then, finally, one Sunday when Tom said he would go, we went to get him and his wife said she had decided that she would not lie to us about him any more. She said Tom was hiding under the bed!! Ben L. went in the house and Tom was under the bed! Ben L. told him to get out from under that bed and come on with him. Tom sheepishly got up and went with us to church. After that Tom would go pretty regularly with us.

One Sunday morning after church was over, Ben L. started to leave. When Tom stopped him and said he wanted Ben L. to pray with him, and for him. I think at least an hour after church closed, Ben L. finally got home. He was so happy and told me that he and Tom prayed for a long time, and all of a sudden, Tom got up off his knees, raised his arms toward God, and said over and over, "Thank you God, Thank you God". Then he turned to Ben L. and said "Bennie, you stay here, I go get my wife". He got in his car, drove about two miles to his house, and was soon back with his wife. Ben L. said they prayed together for a little while, then Virginia accepted Christ as her personal Saviour! They had several children that they always brought to church after that. Only a few weeks passed before Tom came to Ben L. and said that he was going to go back to the reservation and tell his people about Christ! Ben L. told him that he might ought to wait awhile, as he had no job there, and it would be hard on the family. Tom said that God would provide for their needs, and he was going to go, anyway! Ben L. wrote to the New Mexico Baptist Convention about Tom. They answered the letter, saying they probably could not find a place to use a man that old with a rather a large family. Later they wrote back and said that they had found a place for Tom, and they realized he was really devoted to God and his people. They placed him in a mission in a Navajo community of Canoncito, N.M. where there was a house and small church building. After a few years there, he went to Tec Nos Pos, Arizona where he did mission work among his people until he retired on December 31, 1999. All their ten living children are devoted to God, and are active in churches in Albuquerque, and Shiprock, N.M. This event proves to me that no matter who we are, no matter our plight, or place in life, God can and will use us for His glory, if we only turn our lives over to Him.

I was 29 years old when God changed my life after I took Christ into my heart and very life. I will be 79 years old December 31, 2000. I have never doubted my salvation, Never doubted my Saviour, Never doubted God!!!!